PROBLEMS AND POLICY MEASURES FOR GIRL CHILD MARRIAGE IN CHANCHAL - I BLOCK OF MALDA DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL: A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

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STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:

Positions of women in India are changing from time to time since the ancient period.

Rigvedic period:

The position of women in ancient India has been a very complicated one. Some have described their status as "equal to man", while others have held not only in disrespect but even in positive hearted. The cultural history of India reveals that in India theoretically women enjoyed the status of Devi(Goddess) as described in many religious texts of Hindus. But, in practice she had subservient position than man. She was regarded as a "chattle"(a corporal moveable property) with no rights.

In Vedic period they had an honourable place in the society. Women were treated equal to man in all maters of life. They studied the Vedas and composed hymns. Marriage was regarded as a religious bond. Child marriage are unknown.

Post-Vedic period:

The position enjoyed by women in Vedic period deteriorated in post-vedic period. It was gradually degraded in the Puranic periods. It appears that several drastic changes that took place in the Indian society from about 300 BC to the beginning of the Christian era led to the curtailment of freedom of women. Imposition of Brahminical rules and code of conduct, rigid restrictions imposed by caste system and joint family system were the main reasons for lowering of status of women in the period.

A daughter began to be regarded as curse. They were denied the rights of inheritance and ownership of property. Pre-puberty marriages come to be practiced. Some of the Dharmasastras mention about the prohibition of widow remarriage. Sati had become popular by the 7^{th} century AD.

Medieval period:

The period between 11^{th} century to 18^{th} century witnessed further deterioration in the position of women due to the impact of Muslim culture. In this period female infanticide, child marriage, purdah system, sati and slavery were main social evils affecting the position of women.

The birth of female child began to be regarded as curse, a bad luck. There was further curtailment of problem of women in matters of education, mate selection, public appearances etc. She not only continued to hold low status in and out-side home rather her position worsened in this period.

A. S. Altekar, in his book "The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization" (1962) writes: "This for nearly 2000 years from 20 BC to 1800 AD, the position of women steadily deteriorated though she was fondled by the parents, loved by husband and revered by her children.

British period:

During the period of British rule of about 200 years some substantial progress was achived in eliminating inequalities between men and women in matters of education, employment, social property rights and so forth.

Sati, purdah, female infanticide, child marriage, slavery, inheritance, prohibition of widow remarriage and t

He lack of women rights in different fields were some of the problems which attracted the attention of British Raj.

Though the British rulers initially decided not to interfere with the traditional social fabric of Indian people(Hindu) and such they took no steps to bring any change in the status of women in India.

For such measures initiative was provided to them by some social reformers, such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Dayanand Saraswati, Keshab Chandra Sen, Swami Vivekananda, Justice Ranade and others.

After Independence:

The decades after independence have seen tremendous change in the status and position of the women in Indian society. The constitution of India has laid down as a fundamental right the equality of sexes. But, change from a position of utter degradation of women to a position of equality is not a simple case of the progress of women in the modern era.

The best example is provided by the rural India, where in theory women are equated with goddess, but in actual practice, they are treated as drudges. The problems of inferiority, inequality, dependence and the exploitation experienced by women have not much changed in the villages, where most of the Indian lives, even after 70 years of independence.

Thus the following social evils may increases –

i) Female foeticides
ii) Decline in child sex ratio and sex ratio at birth
iii) Female infanticides
iv) Poor health conditions of new born girl child
v) Female child labour
vi) Low literacy rate of girl child
vii) Dropout in schools of girls
viii) Early marriage of girl child
ix) Dowry death
x) Sexual harassment of girl child.

The parents belonging to the poor socio-economic conditions of rural India are more sufferers from the above mentioned curse of the society.

The situation is quite worrisome in case of Child Sex Ratio in India as well as in West Bengal. There is a gradual declining trend in Child Sex Ratio in India as well as in West Bengal. In national level CSR was 976 in 1961, 945 in 1991, 927 in 2001 and 914 in 2011. Where as West Bengal's CSR slight satisfactory, but in declining trends as national level i.e. 967 in 1991, 960 in 2001 and 950 in 2011.

This declining trends in Child Sex Ratio is a major indicator of disparity between men and women. It is shocking that killing of the girl child both before and after birth is still practiced in the country despite legal prohibition and incentive-based schemes provided by the State and Union Government. Restoration of gender balance is not only the sole duty of the Government but its responsibilities bestowed on Non-government Organizations also to campaign for mass awareness.

There are several institutions (Government and Non-government) that are attempting to bring in change in the practices related with the discrimination against the Girl Child in India. Following schemes and programs are being implemented to protect, save and empowerment of Girl Child in India.

i) Balika Samriddhi Yojana –1997- Central Government
ii) Dhan Laxmi Scheme – 2008- Central Government
iii) Ujjawala- - 2014- Central Government
iv) Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao-2015- Central Government
v) Kanyashree Prokalpa -2011- West Bengal

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Franklin (1956, p. 168) rightly observed that sex ratio was an index of economy prevailing in an area and was useful tool for regional analysis. The profound effect of the proportion of the two sexes upon the other demographic elements like population growth, marriage rates, occupational structure, has also been well-recognized (Shyrock, 1976, p. 105). Trewartha (1953) rightly remarked that the proportion of the two sexes is fundamental to the geographic analysis of an area because it is not only an important feature of the landscape but it also influences the other demographic elements significantly. According to R.C. Chandana, "The separate data for males and females are important for various types of planning and for the analysis for other demographic characteristics such as natality, mortality, migration, marital status, economic characteristics, etc."

Scientists all over the world are very much aware of the discriminate behaviour which are made against the girl child and adolescent girls. Lawrence Summers observed that every girl child and adolescent girl should be educated properly and should be given vocational, technical or sport training by which they will become self-sufficient in the society. Therefore, the above author opined that investment in the education of girl child and adolescent girls may provide the highest return.

Vijaya Kumar et al co-related the well being of women with their economic condition. According to them rural poverty is one of the most important factor of India. In India 47% of the people lives below poverty-line. Daily income of the rural people are than the country's average income. In case of women, better health care and higher educational opportunities dreams for their children. Also to them no vocational training centre are accessible to them.

According to U.N.'s scientists education of women is one of the major variable behind the changing rates of social and economic development. Further, former UN Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley observed the growing importance of education to make women very much skillful. It has global impact over the world. He also opined the growing importance of women's education is a new international development. Harry Patrinos is a renowned economists of the World Bank. He also in favour of educating most of the girls in the society. He observed that the profitability of education provide rate of return is indisputable, universal and global. World Bank report says that the girls are underrepresented in schooling, meaning that the investments in specifically at educating women should produce bigger dividends. Women's education also increases the equitability of the distribution of wealth in a society. Women education also changes in the growth of gross domestic product of the country. Inter Press Service described the declaration of the summit which took place in the Latin America in 1998. The resolution of the summit says that education particularly for the girls and adolescent girls and related issues is the backbone of development of a country.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study possesses following objectives-

1. To analyse the distribution of Child Sex Ratio and sex ratio at birth over time and space and to get the idea about female foeticide.

2. To study the about the measures which are taken for survival of girl child and adolescent girls and their. protective measures and health care facilities available and accessible.

3. To find out the causes and what extent the girl children are engaged in various types of jobs.

4. To find out the extent of educational status of girl children and adolescent girls and to observe the extent of dropout girls from schools of different classes.

5. To find out the causes for girl child marriage and their extent.

6. To find out the extent of "Beti Bachao Beti Padhrao Yojana", "Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana" and "Kanyashree Prokalpa" and their influence in the study area.

DATA BASE:

The primary and secondary data will be collected which are as follows –

Chapter Scheme	Nature of data	Sources of data
1. Socio-economic conditions of households of girl child and distribution of sex ratio at birth and child sex ratio and its causes	Land holding, occupation, educational status, religion, caste, family members, birth sex ratio, child sex ratio, sex selective abortion, female mortality, dowry system, income, socio-economic status	Direct field investigation and questionnaire survey, gram panchyat and BDO office, Chanchal police station, Chanchal Super Specialty Hospitals and other medical institutes, Census report , website.
2. Survival and protective measures taken for the newly born baby and availability of health care facilities	Female literacy, crude death rate, infant mortality rate, child sex ratio, employment, fertility rate, age at marriage, body mass index, health and nutrition, nutritional deficiency, mother's education, school enrolment at primary level, gross enrolment ratio. Child protection for violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect, child trafficking, child labour, prostitution, prisoners. Social welfare, education, justice, reduce social exclusion, lower the risk of separation.	Census report, Panchyat and BDO office, SI of Schools office, Hospital and other Medical institutes, District census handbook, Child welfare office, Court and Juvenile court, Ministry of Child welfare, Field survey, Questionnaire survey.
3. work force among the Girl child and adolescent girls	House hold income, illiteracy, ignorance by the parents, family size, expensive education, severe unemployment, idle, child as cheap labour, child as income source.	Field investigation, questionnaire survey, Labour Commission Office.

4. Educational status and distribution of dropouts and survival of girl child and adolescent girls	Number of girls studying in different classes, future educated generation, infant mortality rate, maternal mortality rate, number of child marriage, population explosion, domestic and sexual violence, family income, number of dropouts girl child from different classes , security of girl child, security of girl child, lack of child interest, parents death, household chores, school at distant, teacher's attitude, lack of free education, lack of toilet facility, high age , fail in class exam.	SI of Schools office, Panchyat and BDO office, field survey, questionnaire survey, Hospital and Medical institute, Police station, District Census Handbook.
5. Causes and distribution of child marriage and adolescent girls marriage	Number of married girl child, family income, family size, reduction of girl child's pressure by the parents,	Police station , Panchyat office, NGO, field survey, questionnaire survey
6. The strategies to alleviate the issues	Data regarding dropouts, SSM, Kanyashree Prokalpa, RMSA .	Data from SI office, BDO office, Child Development office, DM office, Field survey, Questionnaire survey.
7. Impact of these Yojona's and Prokalpa's in the societies	Data on impact	Field and questionnaire survey, data from Kanyashree cell of SI office, BDO office and DM office.

METHODOLOGY:

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. Research methods can be put into three following groups-
i) Pre-field
ii) Field and
iii) Post- field.

I. Pre-field Methods:

Pre-field methodology means the research activities which are performed prior to the field work. It consists of two components-

a) In this stage selection of the study area will be done i.e. block, panchyat, village, and households. From each G.P. one village which has lowest child sex ratio will be selected for the intensive survey. The household where girl child reside will be selected for sample survey. The selection of households will be made after considering girl child belonging to different caste groups. As for example General, OBC, SC and ST Hindu and Muslim.

b) Preparation of questionnaire is another component where at first different basic questions are set according to the objective of the study. So that the answer of these questions will be satisfy analysis, the objectives and by the integrating all these objectives. The entire thesis will be written after setting these trial questionnaire. The research scholar has to approach to his study area and carry out his household survey. He will find the questions that irritate the head of households. These questions are either refused or remain unanswered. Then the research scholar has to modify such questions in the way that the head of households feels free to answer them. These process is known as Field-reconssaince. After that trial questionnaire will be modified and transformed into final questionnaire.

II. Field Methods:

As the selection of the study area and study households have become ready then the research scholar will start his field work. In this part sometimes he may face some difficulties as to get correct answers from the heads because some heads may feel uncomfortable to answer truly which may cause harm to him. In that case he has to question the heads in indirect fashion cleverly. So that the reality will come true.

III. Post-field Methods:

After collection of true data these will be enlisted in a master-table where all the questions are elaborately explained. The master-table consisting the data which are scale and size bias. These are needed to be transformed into scale and size freeby applying appropriate statistical techniques. Thus, the raw data are converted into indicators. Then the indicators will be statistically processed and tables are formulated. Besides different cartographic techniques are also applied which will

help to visualize the real world situation of the study area. Sometimes GIS techniques will be applied by which scientific maps will be prepared. The cause and effect relationship of the indicators will be shown by means of linkage diagrams. Then all these statistical tables, maps and diagrams are analysed systematically through scientific procedure which will help to complete the entire thesis.

LOCATION AND SELECTION OF THE STUDY AREA:

Chanchal I Community Development Block an administrative division in Chanchal Sub-division of Malda district in Indian State of West Bengal has been chosen for for the present study. This CD block consists of eight Gram Panchyats i.e. i) Alihanda, ii) Bhagabanpur, iii) Chanchal, iv) Kaligram, v) Kharba, vi) Mahanandapur, vii) Mokdumpur and viii) Motiharpur.

The headquarter of Chanchal Sub-division is situated in this block chanchal I.
Chanchal I is located at 25° 23" N and 87° 59"E . It has an area of 162.08 sq. km.
Chanchal I CD block is a significant area of in respect of location, physiography, administration, literacy, socio-economic characteristics etc.

The area is bounded by Chanchal II block in south, Harishchandrapur I & II in the west, Itahar block (Uttar Dinajpur) in the east and balarampur of Katihar district (Bihar) in the north. This block is a part of the distinguished natural feature of Tal land of the district. River Mahananda makes the north-east boundary of the block. Flood is the frequent phenomenon in the river bank area of the block.

The area is almost entirely under cultivation. Therefore, the major economic activities of the area is agriculture where cultivators and agricultural labourars are more prominent. The principal crops of this part of the Tal land are paddy and jute. But, crops are flooded out frequently with the rise of river Mahananda. So, the area is lagging behind in respect of socio-economy, literacy, health care, sex composition etc.

Under such circumstances it will be quite interesting and necessary to find out how female category of population is treated for their physical and economic development. It will be quite worthy to study the nature and magnitude of Birth Sex Ratio and Child Sex Ratio of the CD block which may highlight the problems of female foeticide, survival protection and education of the girl child and adolescent girls. It is also worthy to study that what extent the girl child are engaged into several low paid jobs and what are the causes for their drop outs from the school. The study also will be carried on about to what extent the adolescent girls are forced to enter into family life through early child marriage. All these adverse activities of our society weaken female section of our entire population.

But it is true that, "Without empowerment of women, no society or state can forge ahead." The ancient time trends such as female foeticide, dowry death, early child marriage, domestic abuse, child labour, sexual harassment etc. have been banned by the government. But it's total impacts are not reflects in the villages of the country like Chanchal I CD block. To confront these adverse situation the government have launched two important schemes i.e. "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" and "Kanyashree". The main objectives of these programmes are to confront these adverse activities .

In the study I will try to reveal causes and impacts of the adverse effects of these social curse and impacts of the schemes taken by the governments.

CHAPTER SCHEME:

The present study will be attained by means of following chapters-

1. Introduction
   a) Conceptual framework
   b) Statement of problem
   c) Research questions
   d) Methodology- i) Pre-field, ii) Field and iii) Post field
   e) Location and selection of the study area
   f) Chapter scheme

2. Literature Survey and Review

3. Historical Perspective of Girl Child Marriage

4. Geographical Appraisal of the Study Area

5. Socio-economic Characteristics of Households of Girl Child.

6. Distribution of Child Sex Ratio and Sex Ratio at Birth

6. Survival and Protective Measures for New Born Girl Babies and availability and accessibility of Health Care Facilities

7. Girl Children and Adolescent Girls Work-force

8. Educational Status and Distribution of Dropout Girls and Adolescent Girls

9. Causes and Distribution of Married Girl Children and Adolescent Girls

10. The Strategies to Alleviate Issues

11. Impact of "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojona", "Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana" and "Kanyashree Prokalpa" in the Socities.

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